

ACT



CBT-i



National Center for

PTSD

POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

CPT



Using VA Mobile Mental Health Apps in PTSD Treatment

December 19, 2018

Pearl McGee-Vincent, PsyD
Clinical Psychologist
National Center for PTSD

At the end of this presentation learners will be able to:

1. Identify mobile mental health apps developed by VA and the National Center for PTSD (NCPTSD)
2. Differentiate between treatment companion apps and self-guided mobile mental health apps
3. Describe the rationale for integrating VA mobile mental health apps into care for Veterans
4. Understand how mobile mental health apps align with the continuum of care
5. Identify steps to take when integrating mobile mental health apps into mental health treatment

I have no actual or potential conflicts of interest related to this presentation.

NCPTSD TECH TEAM



Eve Carlson



Julia Hoffman



Katie Juhasz



Shannon McCaslin



Kile Ortigo



Kelly Ramsey



Robyn Walser



Andrew Chang



Eric Kuhn



Pearl McGee-Vincent



Jason Owen



Sarah Steinmetz



Katherine Miller



Beth Jaworski



Maggi Mackintosh



Carmen McLean



Katie Taylor-Lynch



Annabel Prins

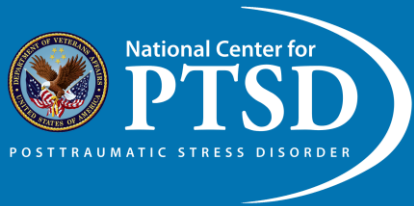
Questions or Comments: MobileMentalHealth@va.gov

Poll Question

Which of the following mobile apps have you tried?

- ☐ PTSD Coach
- ☐ PTSD Family Coach
- ☐ PE Coach
- ☐ CPT Coach
- ☐ CBT-i Coach
- ☐ Mindfulness Coach



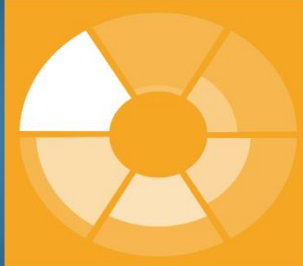


Why Mobile Mental Health Apps?

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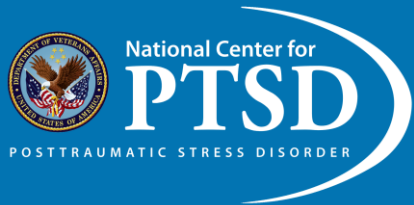
**MOVING
FORWARD**

PTA



- **Accessible**
- **Scalable** (e.g., PTSD Coach downloaded 397,000 times in 98 countries)
- **Tend to be usable, acceptable, and feasible for a wide range of health concerns** (e.g., Ben-Zeev, et al., 2014; Donker et al., 2013)
- **May improve target health outcomes** (e.g., Birney, Gunn, Russell, & Ary, 2016; Evans, Wallace & Snider, 2012; Fukuoka, Gay, Joiner, & Vittinghof, 2015)
- **Cost-effective** (e.g., Iribarren, Cato, Falzon, & Stone, 2017)
- **Can successfully be used with underserved populations, across various types of interventions** (e.g., Aguilera & Muñoz, 2011; Evans, Wallace, & Snider, 2012)



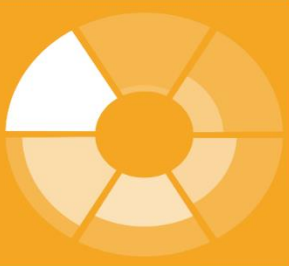


NCPTSD Mobile Mental Health Apps Overview

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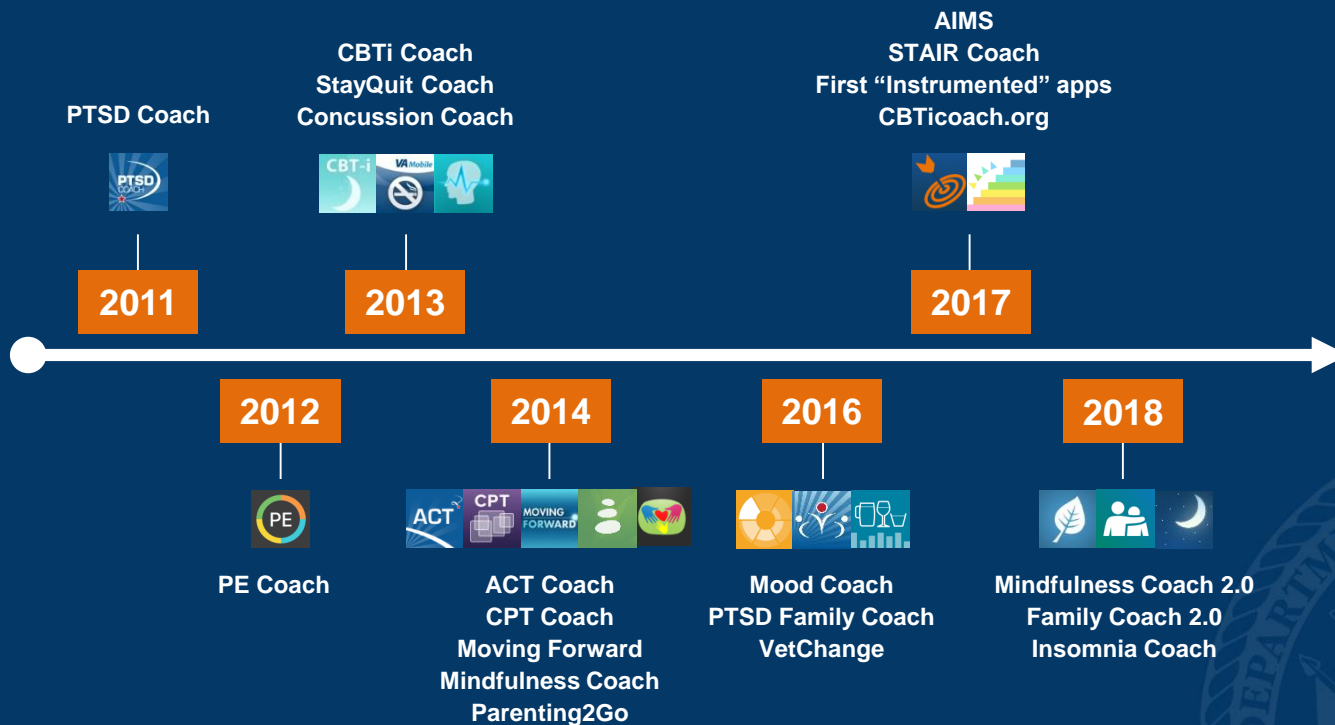
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**MOVING
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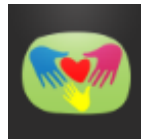
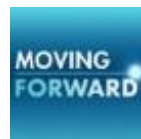
Timeline of NCPTSD Mobile Mental Health Apps



Types of NCPTSD Mobile Mental Health Apps

Self-Care Apps

For those who seek to manage their own symptoms, are not ready to seek focused specialty care, or are supplementing care



Treatment Companion Apps

To be used in conjunction with evidence-based psychotherapies



NCPTSD Apps are...

- Free & publicly available in the app marketplaces
- Private: do not collect or require personal information
- Fully Section 508 compliant
- Evidence-informed
- Tailored to Veterans & VA providers, can be used by anyone
- In addition, all apps:
 - Provide crisis resources
 - Allow progress-tracking
 - Provide psychoeducation & symptom management tools



Acceptability of VA Mobile Mental Health Apps



Studies have demonstrated that VA apps are generally **acceptable to patients**:

- See Babson et al., 2015; Erbes et al., 2014; Kuhn et al., 2014; Miner et al., 2016

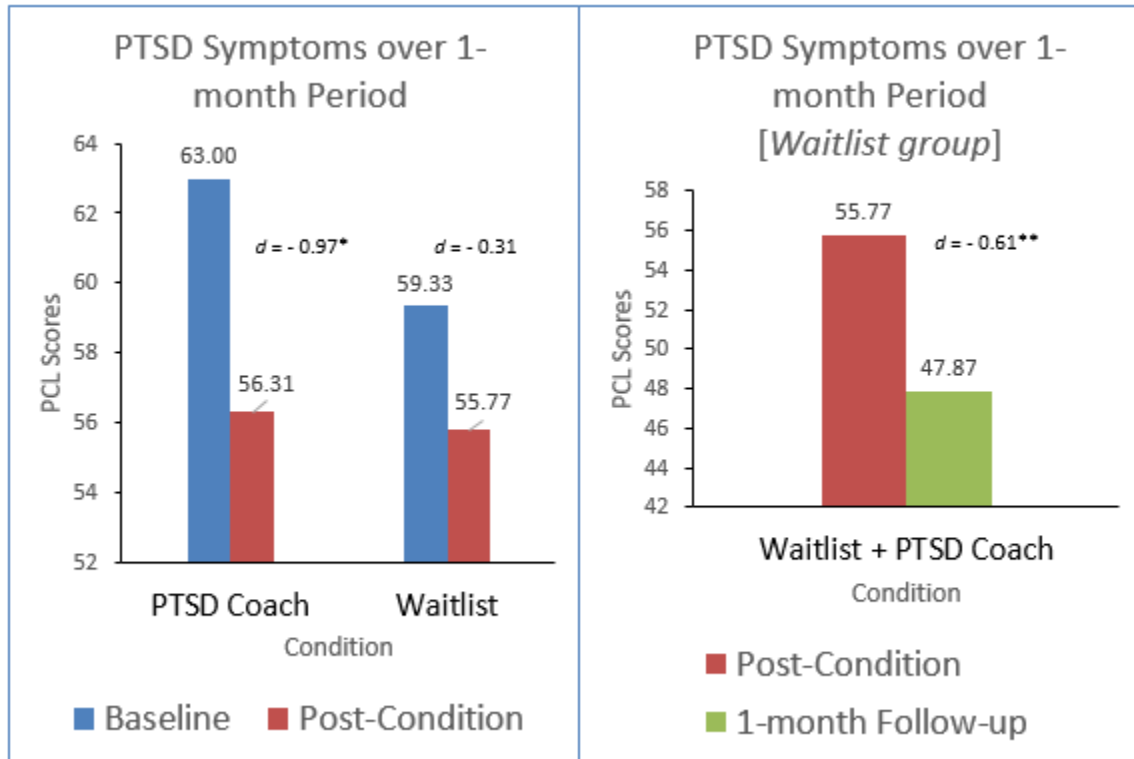
Surveys have also demonstrated that apps are **acceptable to providers**:

- See Kuhn et al., 2015; Kuhn et al., 2016; Miller et al., 2017



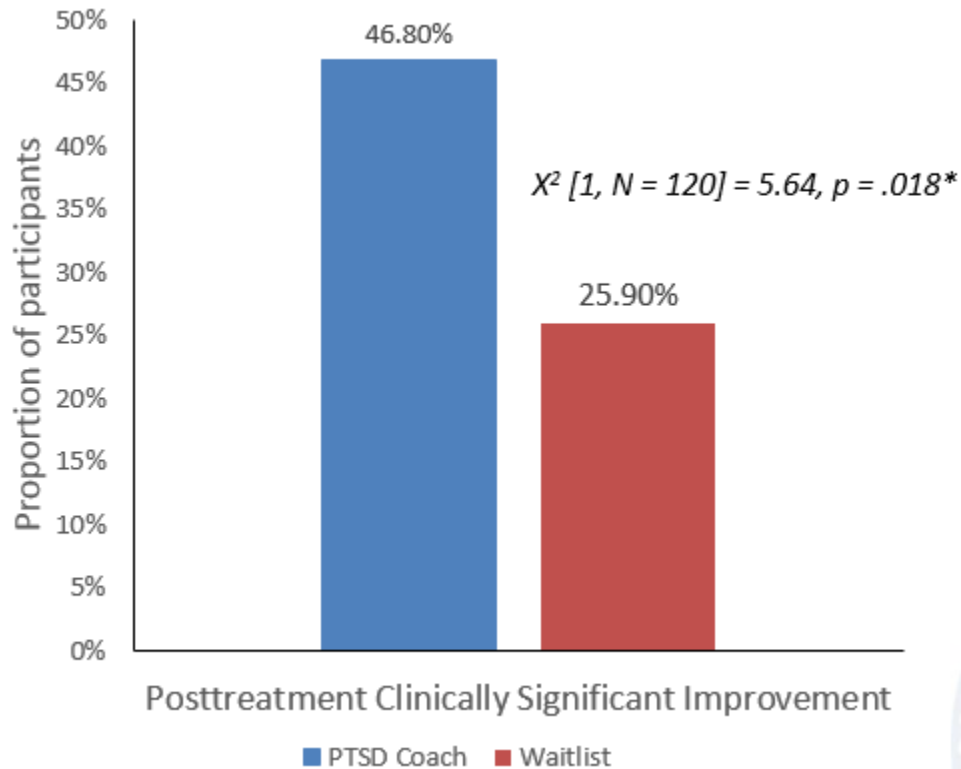
PTSD Coach RCT 1: Community Pilot (N = 49)

Miner et al., 2016



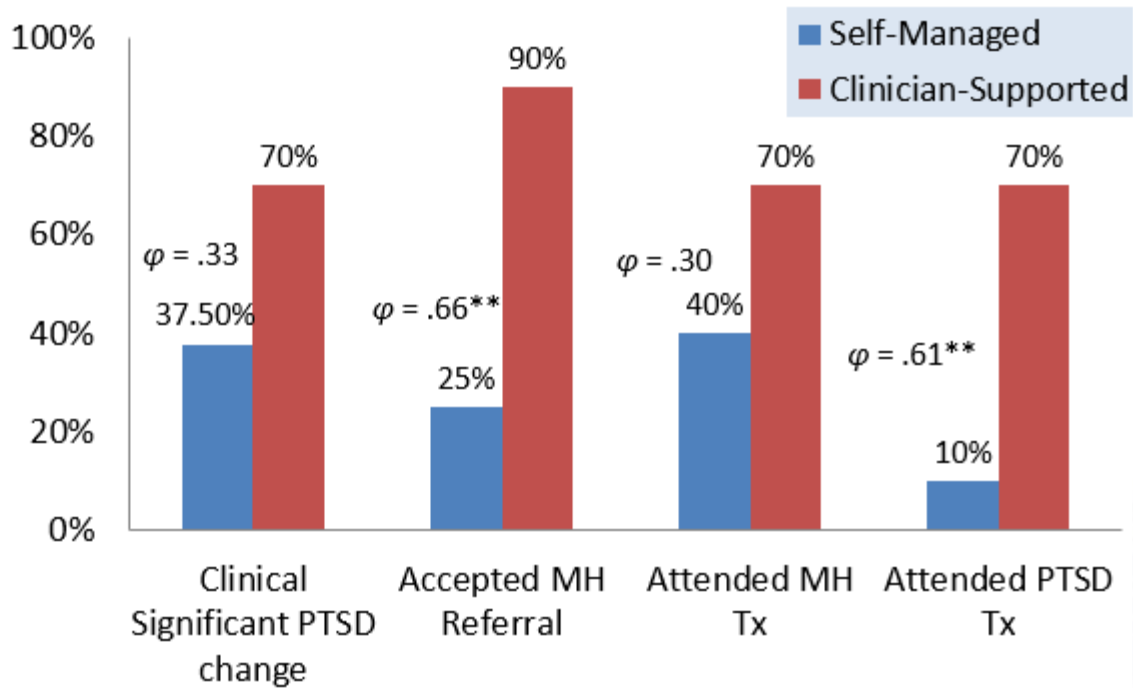
PTSD Coach RCT 2:

Community
Sample
($N = 120$)

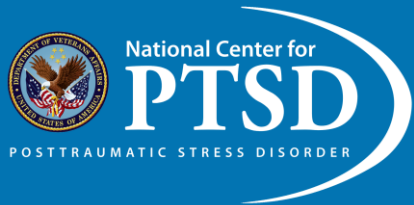


Kuhn et al., 2017

**PTSD Coach
RCT 3:
Primary Care
Providers
(N=20)**



Possemato et al., 2016



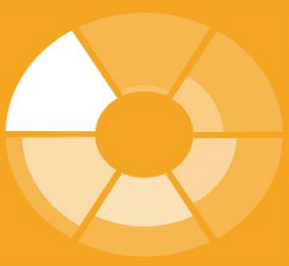
NCPTSD Mobile Apps

For PTSD and Related Concerns

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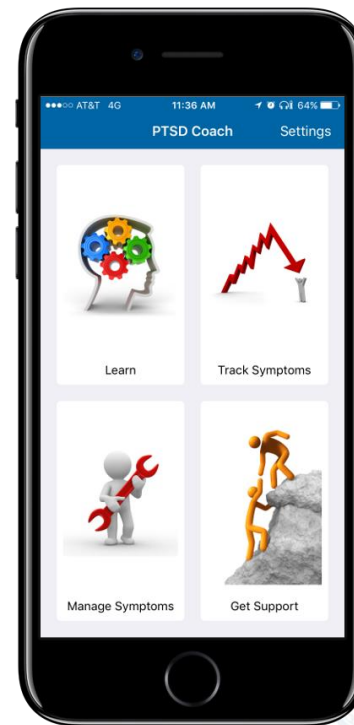
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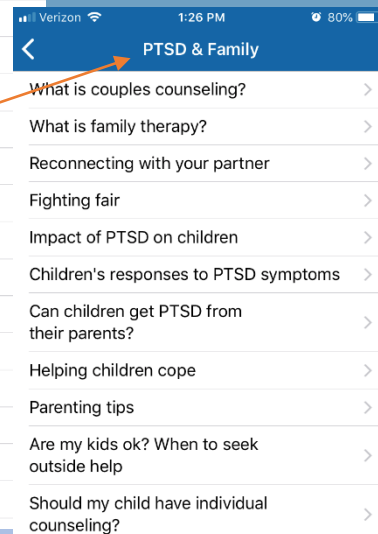
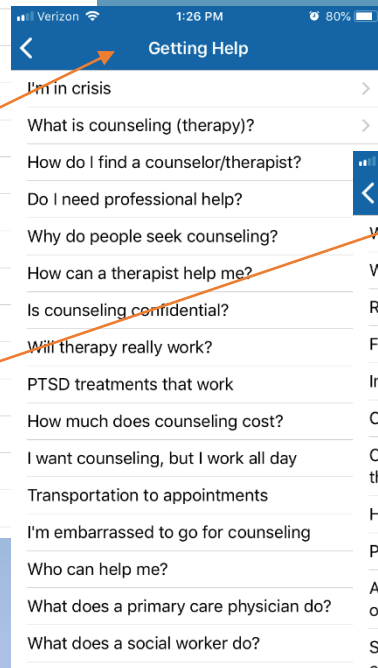
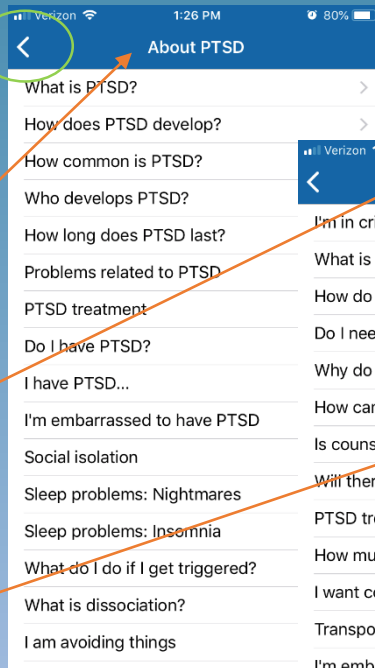
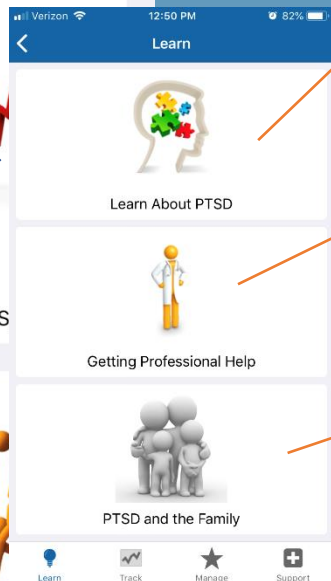
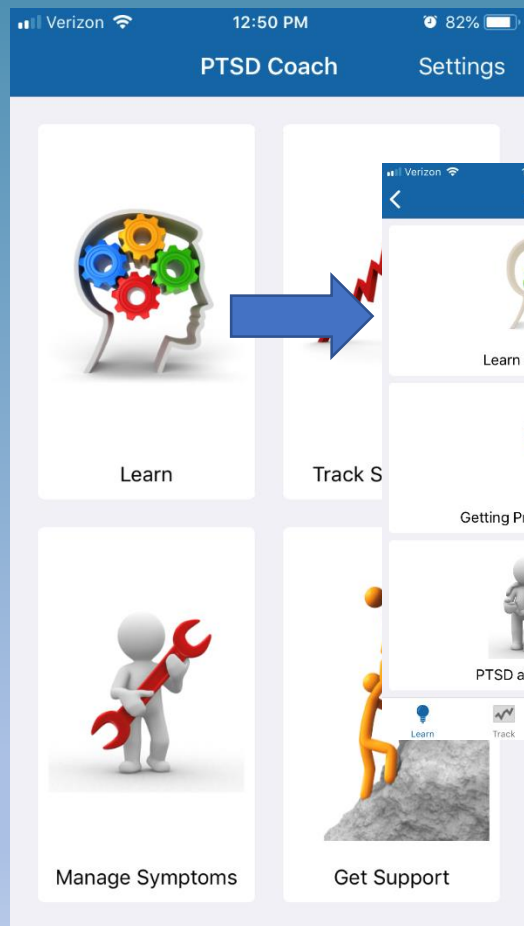


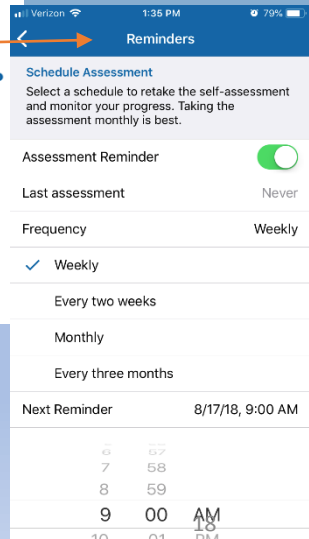
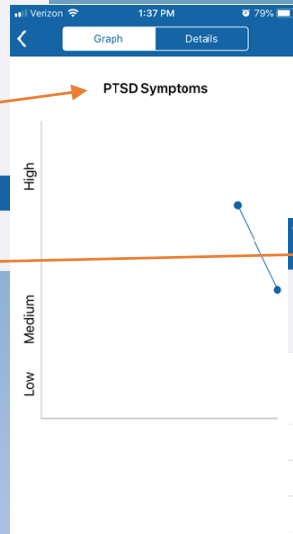
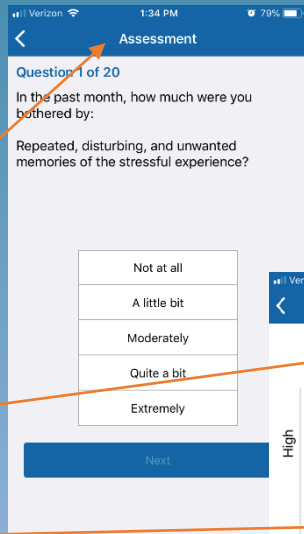
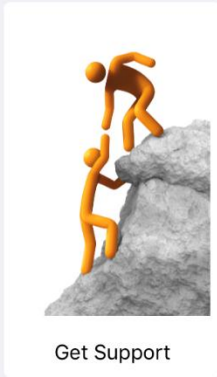
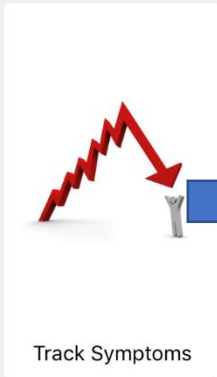
**MOVING
FORWARD**




- **Product Description:**
 - For people with post-traumatic stress symptoms or a PTSD diagnosis
- **Type:**
 - Self-Guided
- **Platform:**
 - iOS + Android










Learn



Get Support

PTSD Coach

Settings

Symptoms Tools Help

Reminded of Trauma

Avoiding Triggers

Disconnected from People


Disconnected from Reality

Sad / Hopeless

Worried / Anxious

Angry

Unable to Sleep



Manage Symptoms


Distress Meter

Help

You can rate your distress level on a scale of 0 to 10. Distress includes everything negative you are feeling, including anger, sadness, fear, physical pain, and so on, all in one score. Zero means no distress at all and ten means the worst distress you could imagine.

This will help you monitor your distress levels and figure out which tools in this app work best for you.

Skip Next



Symptoms Tools

Custom Tools

Create Tool

Other Tools

Ambient Sounds

Change Your Perspective

Connect With Others

Deep Breathing

Grounding

Help Falling Asleep

Inspiring Quotes

Leisure: Time Alone

Leisure: In Town

Leisure: In Nature

Mindfulness: Breathing

Learn Track Manage Support

Breathing

Done

For this exercise, find a comfortable and quiet place to sit, where you are unlikely to be disturbed.

Please note that there will be pauses in the audio so you can practice without distraction.

Time: About 9 minutes.

Ambient Sounds

Done

Select a sound, then close your eyes and take a few minutes to focus on your breathing as you listen.

Beach

Country Road

Crickets

Dripping Water

Forest

Frogs

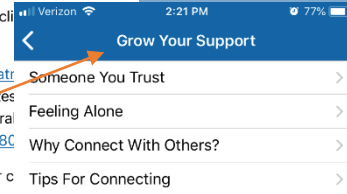
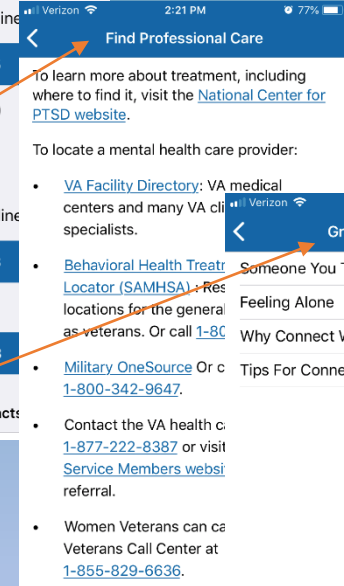
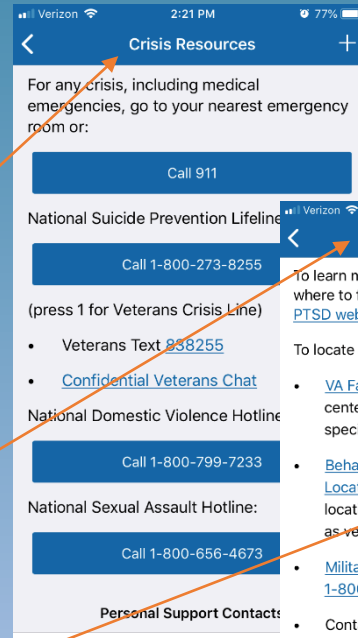
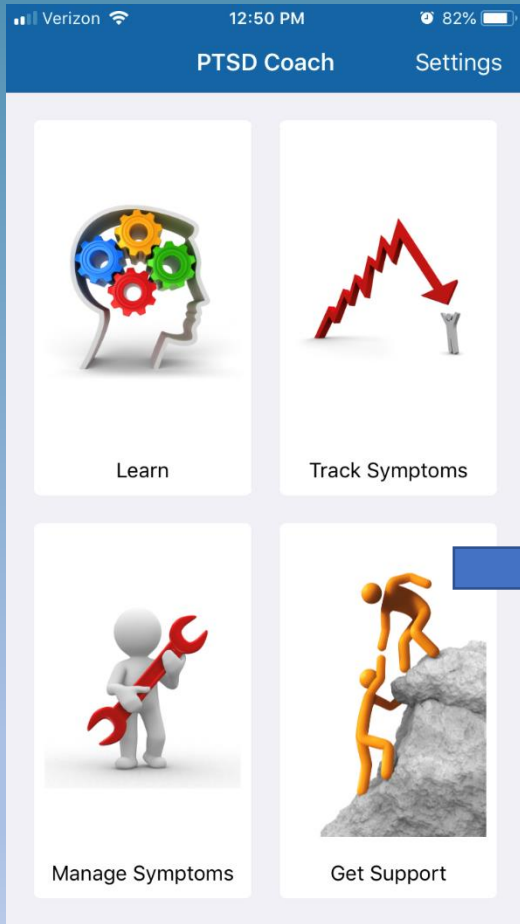
Marsh

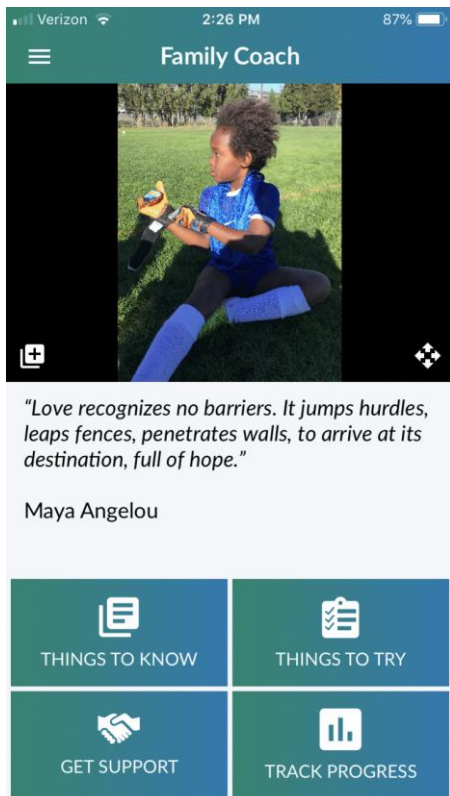
Public Pool


Rain

Stream

00:00 -00:00

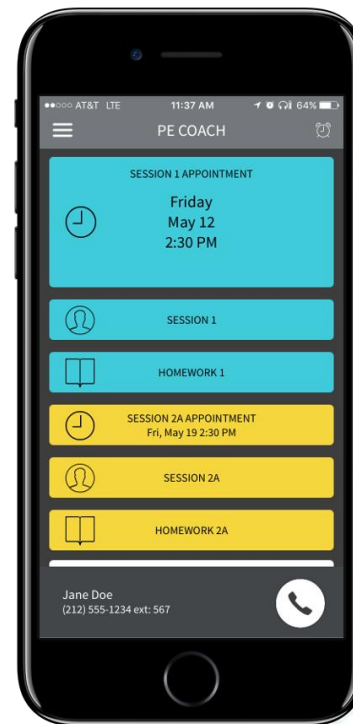




- Released October, 2018 
- Personalized home screen
- Automated, tailored coaching messages
- Dozens of new tools (“Things to try”) and psychoeducation (“Things to know”) topics
- #PTSDFamilyCoach



- **Use:**
 - For patients in Prolonged Exposure therapy
- **Type:**
 - Treatment Companion
- **Platform:**
 - iOS + Android



Verizon 11:55 AM 81%

SESSION 2

Tasks

Complete each of these tasks during your session.

- Record Session
- Review Homework from Previous Session
- Add Anchors for SUDS
- Create In Vivo Hierarchy and SUDS Ratings

I Need To Split This

Mark Session As Complete

Verizon 11:56 AM 80%

SUDS Anchors

Score	Situation
0	
25	
50	
75	
100	

Verizon 12:00 PM 80%

SUDS Anchors

Score	Situation
0	Beach
25	Driving in traffic
50	Giving presentation at work
75	Doing something wrong a...
100	Trauma

Verizon 12:01 PM 80%

MY HIERARCHY

Create your In Vivo Hierarchy by entering situations and providing SUDS ratings

Situation	SUDS
Crowded Store	70
Crowded Restaurant	75
Back To People	80
Fireworks	90



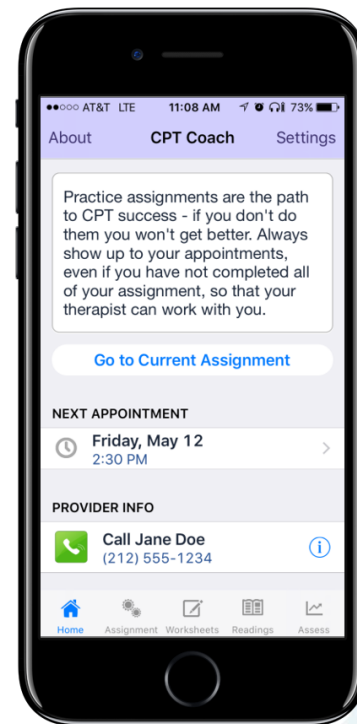


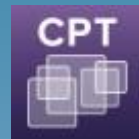
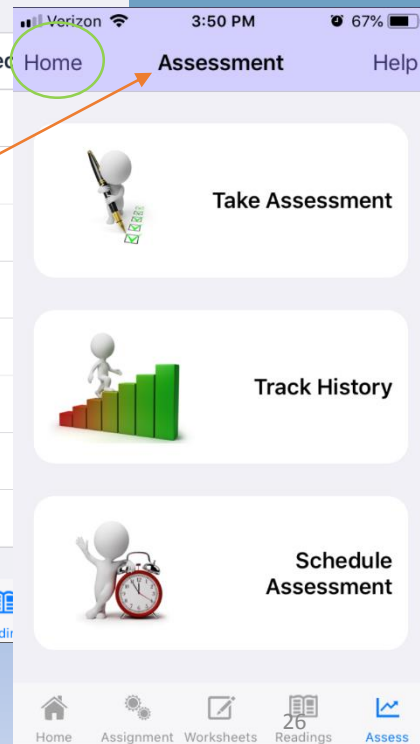
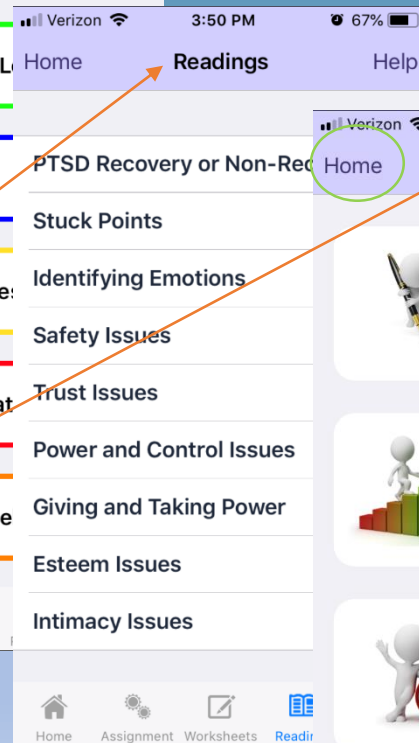
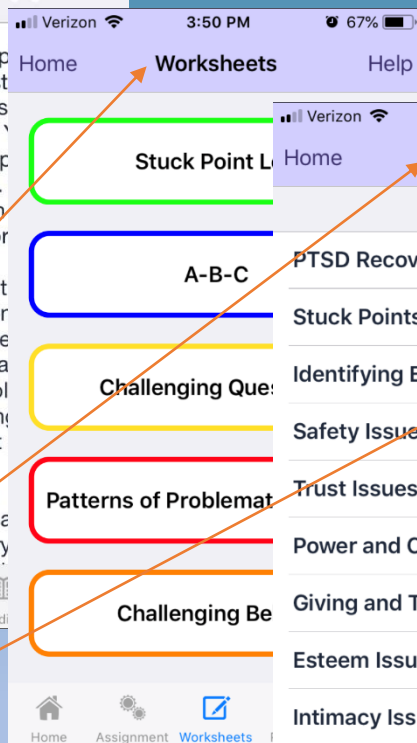
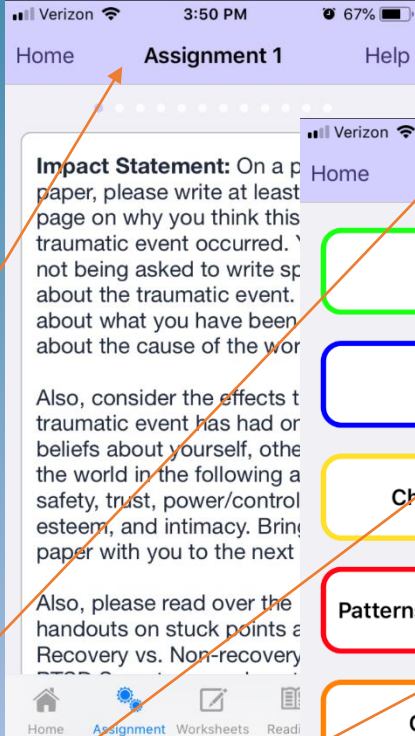
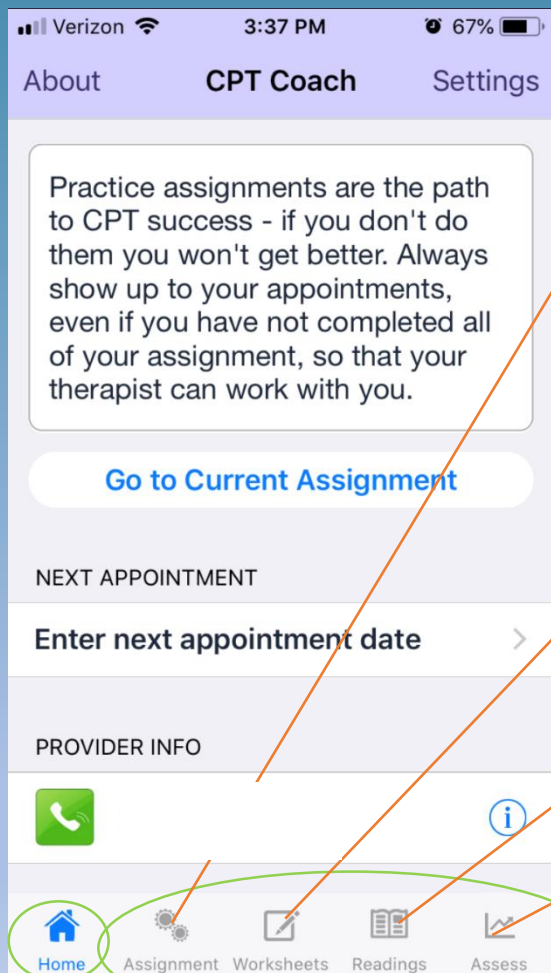
PE Coach Quick Tips:

- If possible, have the patient download the app prior to the first PE session, and/or have an orientation to the app prior to session 1 of PE.
- Each session must be scheduled in the app for the content to be accessed.
- Encourage use of a passcode for the app.
- Remind patient to bring phone fully charged.
- Use airplane mode during session.

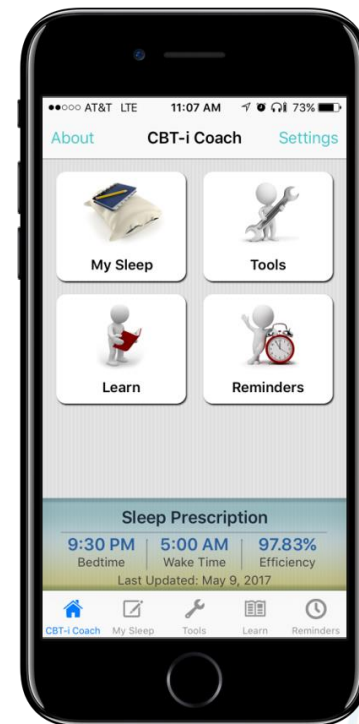


- **Use:**
 - For patients in Cognitive Processing Therapy
- **Type:**
 - Treatment Companion
- **Platform:**
 - iOS + Android

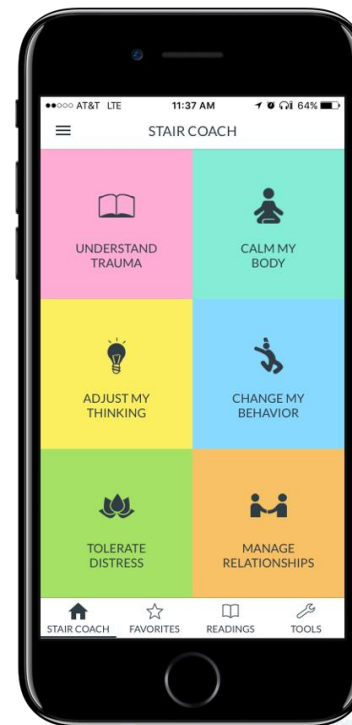




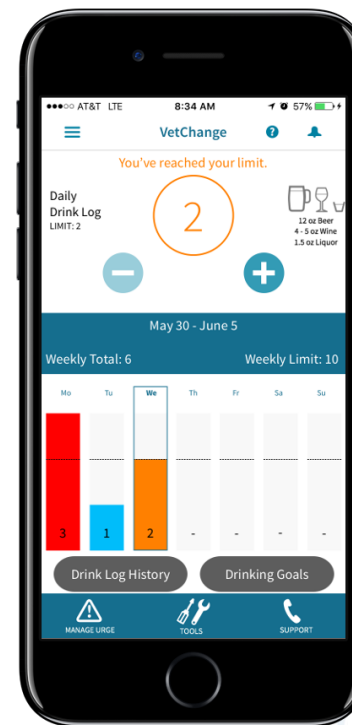
- **Use:**
 - For patients in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia
- **Type:**
 - Treatment Companion
- **Platform:**
 - iOS + Android

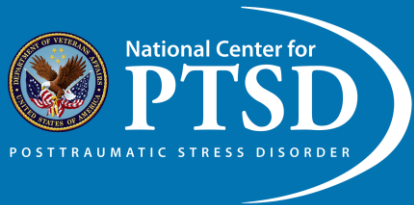


- **Use:**
 - For patients in STAIR (Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Regulation) therapy
- **Type:**
 - Treatment Companion
- **Platform:**
 - iOS



- **Use:**
 - Self-management of PTSD and alcohol use
 - Based on the VetChange web program (www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/change)
- **Type:**
 - Self-Guided
- **Platform:**
 - iOS





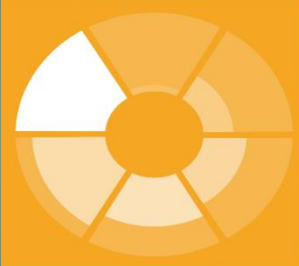
Clinical Integration

Using Mobile Apps as Part of Care

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**MOVING
FORWARD**



Self-Directed Care



Specialty Mental Health

Providing Information



Give informational handout, e.g.:

- Flyer about self-care apps
- Flyer about specific app
- Instructions on how to download

Examples of when to provide info:

- One-time visit/infrequent visits (primary care, inpatient, rural settings)
- Subclinical issues/psychotherapy with a provider not indicated
- Before/after an episode of care

Clinical or non-clinical staff can provide information about apps for self-care

Supplement to Treatment



With Veteran's buy-in and access to needed equipment, provider introduces tool(s) that:

- Facilitate treatment (e.g., skills practice, psychoeducation, self-monitoring) for:
 - primary focus of treatment
 - supplemental issues (e.g., anger management)

Use all features of app or select specific tools or features

Care provided is mostly the same as without app

Provider works within scope of practice and knowledge (e.g., is trained in CBT skills in apps)

Provider integrates app in ways that fit with the treatment being provided (e.g., assigning homework with app)

Treatment Companion



For Veterans participating in an evidence-based treatment (e.g., CBT-I, PE, CPT, STAIR, ACT):

- The app is presented as an option (for homework completion, skills practice, self-assessment, etc.)
- Alternatives (e.g., paper worksheets, tape recorder) also presented

EBT is delivered per protocol

Following an episode of care, apps may be recommended for ongoing self-management and self-monitoring of symptoms

Things to Consider Before Integrating Apps into Care

Assess whether integrating mobile apps into care is right for you.

- Consider your rationale for integrating mobile apps into care:
 - How do you anticipate clinical integration of apps will fit with the kind(s) of treatment you provide?
 - What benefits or “value added” do you anticipate for you and your clients?
 - What concerns or questions do you have?
- Consider your use cases:
 - Which apps will you use? How will you decide?
 - Which clients will you recommend apps to? How will you decide?
 - At what point in treatment will you introduce apps into care?

Mobile apps do not replace treatment with a provider!



Step 1: Learn the App

Before introducing a mobile app to a client, spend time learning the features and functionality of the app.

- Is the app free?
- Does it collect identifiable data?
- Is it available on iOS, Android, or both?
- Is there any research supporting the app? Is the app evidence-informed?
- How does it fit with the type of care you provide?
 - e.g., The app has tools for breathing, relaxation, and symptom tracking, which I incorporate as part of treatment
 - e.g., The app includes components of an evidence-based treatment protocol for which I typically use paper handouts and assignments
 - e.g., The app has psychoeducation and coping skills that I can recommend as self-care tools to those who decide they aren't ready for treatment; or for ongoing self-care post-treatment



Plan to budget at least 1 hour to go through an app on your own, learning the different features and navigation

Step 2: Before Recommending a Mobile App to a Client...

Assess client's interest and access to the needed technology:

- Do you own a mobile device? Which kind?
- Are you familiar with downloading apps?
- Have you downloaded any health-related apps, for example an app that teaches stress management or counts calories?
- Would you be interested in learning more about an app we could use in your treatment?
- Have you heard of _____ Coach?...



Step 3: Demonstrate the App

- Decide whether you are willing to use your own device to demo the app.
- We recommend putting the device in airplane mode for demo.
- Ideally, the client will have the opportunity to practice navigating the app during the session.
- Be prepared to answer any questions about app navigation or features.
 - Clients or providers can contact our team at MobileMentalHealth@va.gov for technical support (not for clinical issues).

Step 4: Informed Consent

- Discuss expectations and rationale; present app as an option.
- Do not overstate the evidence.



Step 5: Addressing Privacy and Security

Q. Who can see my data?

A. No information that could identify you personally is ever collected or stored by this app- your data are completely anonymous.

This applies to all NCPTSD Mobile Mental Health Apps.

Quick Tip: Recommend keeping device passcode protected.































Step 6: Assigning Homework

R_x

PRESCRIPTION FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH


Mobile & Web Resources

<input type="checkbox"/>	 PTSD Coach 	<input type="checkbox"/>	 ACT Coach 	<input type="checkbox"/>	 Anger & Irritability Management (AIMS)  https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/AIMS
<input type="checkbox"/>	 PTSD Coach Online  https://go.usa.gov/xN9Hb	<input type="checkbox"/>	 CBT-i Coach 	<input type="checkbox"/>	 Moving Forward  https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/movingforward/
<input type="checkbox"/>	 PTSD Family Coach 	<input type="checkbox"/>	 Mindfulness Coach 	<input type="checkbox"/>	 Parenting2Go  https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/parenting/
<input type="checkbox"/>	 CPT Coach 	<input type="checkbox"/>	 Mood Coach 	<input type="checkbox"/>	 VetChange  https://www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/change/
<input type="checkbox"/>	 PE Coach 	<input type="checkbox"/>	 STAIR Coach 		

Access free mobile apps and online resources here: www.ptsd.va.gov

RECOMMENDATION:

National Center for PTSD

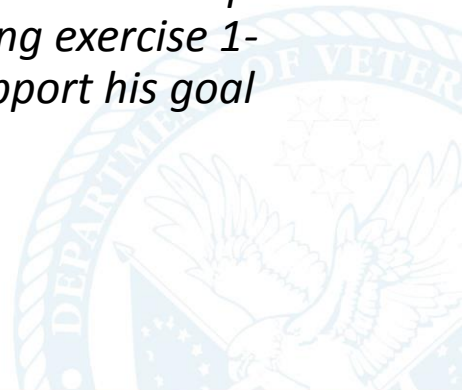




Step 7: Document

Note example:

Introduced PTSD Coach, a free VA mobile app, to Veteran as an option to use in between visits for education, coping skills practice, and tracking symptoms. Discussed privacy and security and potential risks and benefits as relevant to use of this app. Veteran stated, "I'll download it and give it a try." During session, practiced the "deep breathing" audio exercise in the app. Veteran agreed to practice breathing exercise 1-2x/day between now and next visit, either with app or on his own, to support his goal of "not being so on edge all the time."



Putting it all together

Before integrating a mobile app (or online program) into care:

- Step 1: Learn the app
- Step 2: Assess appropriateness

Next:

- Step 3: Demonstrate
- Step 4: Obtain informed consent
- Step 5: Address security, privacy, and any other questions
- Step 6: Assign homework (...and check-in about homework)
- Step 7: Document
- ...and ongoing feedback, assessing challenges and what's working, focus on therapeutic alliance, etc. just as you would without app



Summing it up:

1. NCPTSD offers free, publicly available apps for self-management or as treatment companion tools.
2. Emerging evidence suggests that NCPTSD mobile apps are acceptable to providers and patients, and can supplement care in a variety of ways.
3. If you decide to use apps in the care you provide, make time to follow the steps for clinical integration.
4. For app-related questions, feedback, or technical help, email us at MobileMentalHealth@va.gov.
 - For clinical consultation, contact the PTSD Consultation Program.



What Next?

Visit us online for additional materials and information:

- <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/>
- www.myvaapps.com
- SharePoint (on VA network only): [Mobile Mental Health](#)

Download apps:

- iTunes/App Store
- Google Play Store



Contact us:

- MobileMentalHealth@va.gov





DATE / TIME

Every 2nd Wednesday of the month, 12-1pm EST / 9-10am PST

HOW TO JOIN

Log into TMS and search “PBI” to register for CE credit
and/or

Contact us for the Outlook invitation: MobileMentalHealth@va.gov

NEXT CALL

1/9/19 (Wednesday)

Veterans' attitudes toward mental health apps: Qualitative study of rurality and age differences



Samantha Connolly, PhD

*Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Healthcare Organization and Implementation Research (CHOIR); Clinical Psychology Fellow, General Mental Health Clinic
Office / Facility: VA Boston Healthcare System, Harvard Medical School*



National Center for
PTSD

POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Thank you!

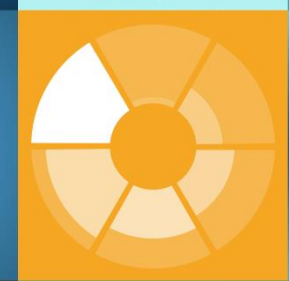
Additional questions?

MobileMentalHealth@va.gov

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**MOVING
FORWARD**

PFA

**PTSD
COACH**





PTSD Consultation Program
FOR PROVIDERS WHO TREAT VETERANS

(866) 948-7880 or PTSDconsult@va.gov



**Please enter your
questions in the Q&A box
and be sure to include your
email address.**

The lines are muted to avoid background noise.



PTSD Consultation Program
FOR PROVIDERS WHO TREAT VETERANS

(866) 948-7880 or PTSDconsult@va.gov

Employee Education System

VHA TRAIN

Welcome users of VHA TRAIN!
To obtain continuing education credit
please return to www.vha.train.org
after the lecture.

TRAIN help desk: VHATRAN@va.gov



PTSD Consultation Program
FOR PROVIDERS WHO TREAT VETERANS

(866) 948-7880 or PTSDconsult@va.gov

CEU Process for users of VHA TRAIN (non-VA)

Registration—> Attendance —> Evaluation —> Certificate



*Register in
TRAIN.*



*Listen to the
lecture.*



*Return to
TRAIN for
evaluation.*



*Follow the
directions to
print
certificate.*

TRAIN help desk: VHATRAN@va.gov

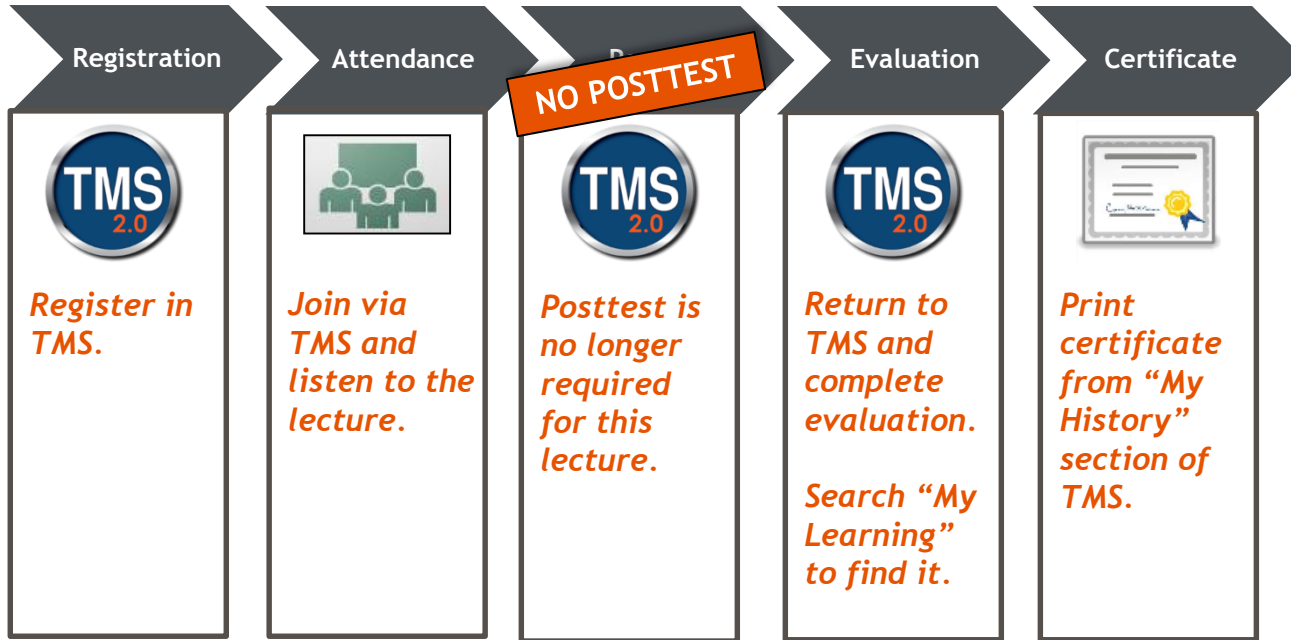


PTSD Consultation Program

FOR PROVIDERS WHO TREAT VETERANS

(866) 948-7880 or PTSDconsult@va.gov

CEU Process (for VA employees)





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UPCOMING TOPICS

SAVE THE DATE: Third Wednesday of the Month from 2-3PM (ET)

January 16	<i>Lethal Means Safety: How PTSD Clinicians Can Have the Conversation</i>	Bridget Matarazzo, PsyD
February 20	<i>Spirituality and PTSD</i>	J. Irene Harris, PhD
March 20	<i>Treatment Engagement and Retention in Patients with PTSD</i>	Shannon Kehle-Forbes, PhD
April 17	<i>PTSD Diagnostic Challenges</i>	Matthew Friedman, MD, PhD
May 15	<i>Moral Injury</i>	Sonya Norman, PhD

For more information and to subscribe to announcements and reminders go to
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FREE TRAINING IN PROLONGED EXPOSURE THERAPY FOR PROVIDERS WHO TREAT VETERANS WITH PTSD

Non-VA Providers:
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